USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Programs Update for STAC

3/12/2025 **Leslie Nelson, State Conservationist for Programs**

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

FY2025 Program Delivery

Delivery Decisions for FY2025

- Application batching deadline for most programs (EQIP, AMA, CSP) was August 23, 2024
- Application deadline for ACEP WRE and ALE was December 6, 2024 and December 20, 2024
- Batching deadline for FY26 is set for August 22, 2025. Sign up is continuous

ACT NOW-FY25

The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service in Maine (NRCS-ME) is using Act Now to deliver conservation contracting faster.

The Act Now process allows NRCS to approve and obligate a ranked application in a designated ranking pool when an application meets or exceeds a state-determined minimum ranking score without waiting until the NRCS field office ranks all applications in the ranking pool.

ACT NOW-FY25

- Applications eligible for the Act Now ranking pools were accepted on a continuous sign-up basis in the order received until March 7, 2025.

- Any application that ranks at or above the NRCS-ME established minimum ranking score of 75 points will be preapproved, as long as funds are available.

ACT NOW-FY25

- EQIP Planning Activities ACT NOW-
  - Set aside funds were expended in January
  - 194 ranked applications were preapproved for funding

- EQIP IRA ACT NOW-
  - 85 ranked applications
  - IRA obligations are currently on hold per National Office

FY2025 Fund Pools

FY25 Statewide Fund Pools-Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- Beginning Farm-Ag Waste
- On Farm Energy
- Organic Initiative
- Socially Disadvantaged
- State Wildlife
- Tribal Projects
- Urban
- NWQI
- Water Conservation (Irrigation)
- Conservation Incentive Contracts (CIC)-focus on pastureland

FY25 Statewide Fund Pools-Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)

- High Tunnel Systems
- Irrigation (both micro and sprinkler)

FY25 Statewide Fund Pools-Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- Ag Land Classic
- Ag Land Beginning Farmer
- Ag Land Socially Disadvantaged
- Ag Land Organic (not for CSP-IRA)
- NIPF Classic
- NIPF Beginning Farmer
- NIPF Socially Disadvantaged

CSP-IRA CURRENTLY ON HOLD PER NATIONAL OFFICE

FY25 Statewide Fund Pools-EQIP IRA

Climate Smart Agricultural and Forestry practices

- Forestry
- Agland (Crop, Pasture, Farmstead)

  Note: Wildlife practices are eligible in both pools
- Socially Disadvantaged

EQIP-IRA CURRENTLY ON HOLD PER NATIONAL OFFICE

Local Fund Pools

FY25 EQIP Local fund pools:

- Agricultural Waste
- Cropland
- Forestry
- Pasture

FY2025 Allocations and Preapprovals

FY25 Allocations and Preapprovals (as of 3-11-25)

Traditional Program Allocations:

- **EQIP:** $8,724,551
  - EQIP State Pools: $4,800,000 (80% preapproved)
  - EQIP Local Pools: $3,250,000 (85% preapproved)
  - EQIP NWQI: $623,000 (100% preapproved)

FY25 Allocations and Preapprovals (as of 3-11-25)

Traditional Program Allocations:

- **AMA:** $675,000 (99% preapproved)
  - High Tunnel: $303,000
  - Micro-Irrigation: $183,000
  - Sprinkler: $127,500

- **CSP:** $1,070,000 (99% preapproved)

FY25 Allocations and Preapprovals (as of 3-4-25)

Preapprovals and obligations are underway.

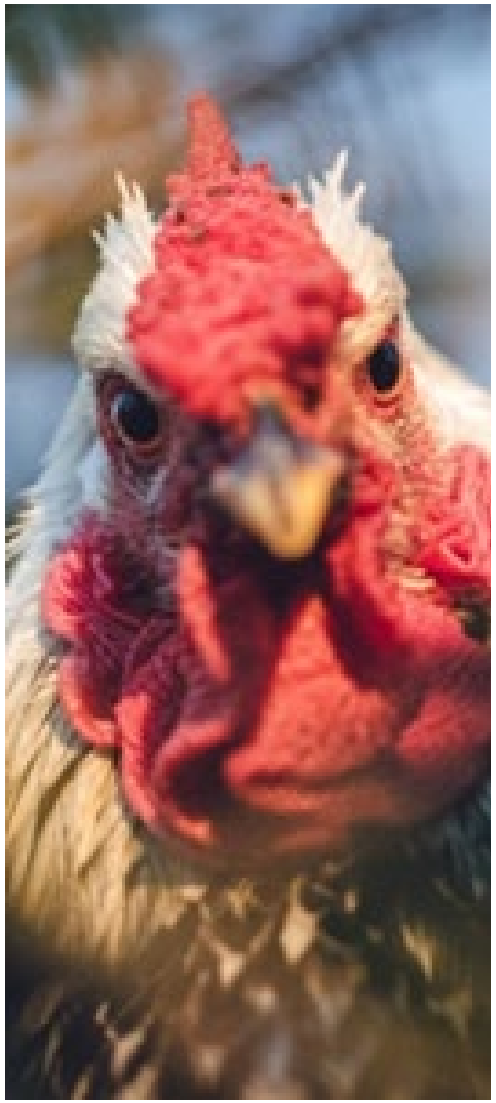
The goal is to obligate initial allocations by June 30, 2025.

Upcoming Deadlines:

- Application Deadlines for **Fiscal Year 2026** (EQIP, AMA, CSP): Aug. 22, 2025

- Currently accepting applications for Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP).

QUESTIONS?



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